



News Release

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For Release: September 20, 2004

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Subject: Duck Hunting in the Pintail Slough Management Unit of Havasu National Wildlife Refuge

Opening days for hunting are fast approaching. Havasu National Wildlife Refuge has made a few changes to this season's hunts. The changes apply only to the Pintail Slough management unit. Hunts on all other areas of the refuge will be managed the same as the 2003/2004 season. Pintail Slough will be open for dove and cottontail hunting September 1 through September 15. All hunting (including youth hunting) is permitted from ½ hour before sunrise to noon MST.

The Pintail Slough duck season may be delayed due to habitat improvement activities. A joint effort between Ducks Unlimited, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and the refuge will expand seasonal wetland habitat and restore historic forests and hydrology. When a completion date for the project is known, a press release will be issued notifying hunters when the waterfowl season will begin. Other than the possible delay, the waterfowl season will be conducted identical to past years. Hunters may reserve a blind over the phone or draw for unclaimed blinds on hunt mornings. Interested hunters may call the refuge headquarters at (760) 326-3853 ext. 23 for weekly updates. The Pintail Slough duck blinds will be closed to hunting on Christmas Day.

The Pintail Slough agricultural fields will be closed to all entry (including hunting) from October 01, 2004 through January 29, 2005 to reestablish goose use of the fields. For the past several years, the refuge has been repairing the water delivery system that feeds the agricultural fields. The inability to deliver water prevented goose browse from being planted for several seasons. Now that the repairs have been completed, the refuge is trying to bring birds back to the area. According to Refuge Manager John Earle, "We spend considerable effort each year managing the fields to provide browse for wintering geese. The browse we provide is high quality, but human disturbance is keeping the birds from reestablishing their use. We're hoping that by closing the area to all entry, the geese will use the fields again. Once the birds are consistently using the area, we can slowly reintroduce some disturbance. By doing so, refuge visitors will again be able to enjoy their presence while the geese are provided quality browse."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.